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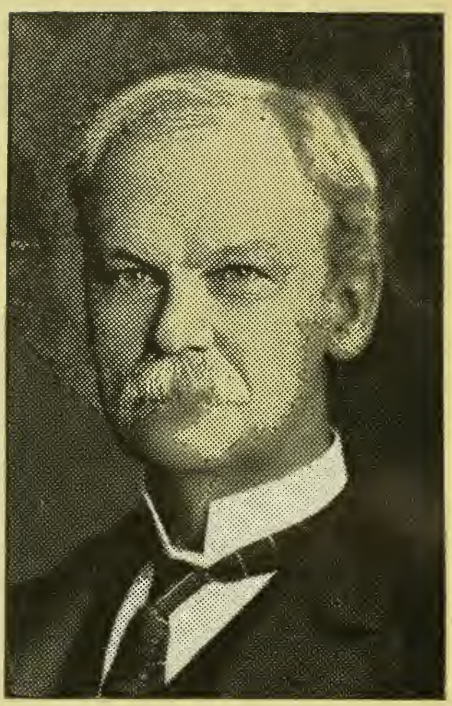


Eugene Jaffran.

PUBLICATIONS

of the

Sharon Historical Society

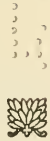
of

SHARON, MASSACHUSETTS

A MEMORIAL OF EUGENE TAPPAN, Esq.

Late Corresponding Secretary

John Goddard Phillips, *Editor*



No. 6 January, 1910

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

The Editor acknowledges his indebtedness to the following sources and persons for assistance in the preparation of this Sketch:

Diaries and other writings of the late Eugene Tappan.

Pleasant talks with his daughter, Miss Muriel Tappan.

Letters from his sister and childhood "chum," Mrs. Ada B. Dow of Topsfield, and from his early schoolmate, Mr. Emmons Hatch of Winchester.

Letters from his old friends, Mr. Albert A. Conant of Topsfield, and Mr. E. Lawrence Barnard of Winchester.

Letters from his college friends, Rev. J. L. R. Trask, D.D., of Springfield, and Hon. Joel D. Miller of Leominster.

Letters from Judge Elijah George and Bentley W. Warren, Esq., of Boston, who were his associates in professional work.

Communications from Rev. Almon J. Dyer of Sharon, and Rev. Osmond J. Billings of Upton.

To all of whom he desires to express his thanks, his appreciation of the valuable help so cheerfully given, and the pleasure gained by him from much thought in memory of a mutual friend.

J. G. P.,
Editor.

Sharon, July 3, 1909.

EUGENE TAPPAN.

1840--1908.

1840. Born at Marshfield, Massachusetts.
1851. Family moved to Bridgewater.
1852. Family moved to Farmington, N. H.
1856. Taught school at Farmington.
1857-9. Fitted for college at Kimball Union Academy.
1859. Taught school at Marshfield.
1860. Entered Williams College.
1864-5. Taught school at West Dennis and Centreville.
1871. After reading law at Worcester was admitted to the Bar.
1872. Married Miss Crosby at Barnstable.
1875. A practicing lawyer at Boston.
1876. Became a resident at Winchester.
1880-2-4-6. Children born.
1889. Wife died.
1894. Married Miss Jones of Enfield, N. H.
1895. Appointed Assistant Register of Probate, Suffolk County.
1898. Moved to Sharon.
1900. Second wife died.
1902. Inaugurated Old Home Week in Sharon.
1903. Founded Sharon Historical Society.
1908. Died at Sharon.

ANCESTRY.

TOPPAN, Abraham, baptised April 10, 1606; lived in Yarmouth, Eng.; m. Susanna Taylor; sailed to New England in 1637 in the "Mary Ann" with his wife and two children; settled in Newbury, Mass.; d. November 5, 1672, in the house he had built in "Toppan's Lane."

TOPPAN, Peter, physician, b. 1634, in England, and brought by his parents to Newbury; m. April 3, 1661, Jane Batt; d. November 3, 1707.

TOPPAN, Samuel, b. June 5, 1670; m. June 3, 1701, Abigail Wigglesworth, of Malden; d. in Newbury, October 30, 1750.

TAPPAN, Benjamin, clergyman, b. in Newbury, February 28, 1720; lived in Manchester, 1745 to 1790; m. Elizabeth Marsh, of Haverhill, in 1746; d. in Manchester, May 6, 1790.

TAPPAN, Samuel, schoolmaster, b. in Manchester, May 7, 1759; m. in 1789 Aurelia Bingham, of Canterbury,

Conn.; d. in Portsmouth, N. H., April 29, 1806.

TAPPAN, Daniel Dana, clergyman, b. in Newburyport, October 20, 1798; (Brother William Bingham Tappan, clergyman, of Philadelphia, wrote the hymn, "There is an hour of peaceful rest," and published several books of poems) m. (2nd) July 10, 1837, Abigail Marsh of Newburyport. She d. May 13, 1857, in Farmington, N. H. He d. January 15, 1890, in Topsfield.

TAPPAN, Eugene, lawyer, b. in Marshfield, July 4, 1840; m. (1st) in Barnstable, December 24, 1872, Alice Rebecca Crosby. She d. April 19, 1889, in Winchester. M. (2nd) December 12, 1894, Clara M. Jones, of Enfield, N. H. She d. at Sharon, October 30, 1900. Children (all by 1st marriage) Crosby, b. September 11, 1880; Muriel, b. March 22, 1882; Robert, b. December 10, 1884; Dana, b. October 26, 1886; all in Winchester. He d. July 10, 1908, in Sharon.

NOTE.—The spelling of the name was changed from Toppan to Tappan in the fourth generation.

PARENTAGE AND BOYHOOD.

So far as heredity goes Eugene Tappan had an excellent start in life. Several of his ancestors were professional men. His great-grandfather was a clergyman; his grandfather a schoolmaster, who also on occasion preached a sermon. His father was an educated man, being graduated at Bowdoin College, and a clergyman of the Orthodox Congregational faith. On the female side, also, his descent is marked by representatives of families of high character, if not indeed of distinction.

His father, Rev. Daniel Dana Tappan, was a man of strong individuality and, from what we read of him, it is apparent that the son, Eugene, resembled him in many ways.

The father wrote of himself, thus:

"I used [when a young man] to write compositions, hunting up synonyms in the dictionary to suit myself to the word that pleased my eye or ear; and I have probably felt the advantage of it ever since." (Abraham Lincoln did the same.)

It is said that he was fond of writing poetry all through life, frequently writing verses for friends, and, on one occasion, wrote, and delivered many times afterwards, a temperance address wholly in rhyme.

Dr. Taylor, with whom he studied theology, said of his pupil:

"His commendation is that the common people hear him gladly."

A member of his family says of him:

"We thought very much of 'Cousin Daniel,' he was so pleasant and vivacious and entered so genially into all the childish sports. Indeed, his entering heartily into whatever he did was characteristic of him through life."

He is also described as enjoying "long walks," and being "of short stature, and quick of motion."

It is evident that he was not without a keen sense of humor, as in speaking lightly of himself he would often say:

"I have D.D. before my name instead of after it," and on the day preceding his death, in his ninety-third year, he remarked:

"I do not know but I am as fit to go now as I ever shall be."

As a "minister of the Gospel" he was earnest in his work and original in his methods. His son, Eugene, wrote of him:

"He carefully instructed his people in the geography and local incidents of the Holy Land. Pointing to the map he would show how Jesus in passing from Judea to Galilee 'must needs go through Samaria.'"

He was commonly called "Father Tappan" in the places where he was pastor.

Again his son wrote:

"He had good success in enlivening prayer-meetings by assigning topics and heads of remarks in advance to several speakers."

The following are extracts from some of Rev. Mr. Tappan's sermons:

"The essence of religion is a perpetual recognition of God."

"Be busy, busy, not in useless things, not in trifles, but in important things. Indolence is a great foe to happiness."

"I hope you will think much of making others happy. It will tend to make you cheerful; and more than all, it is right. If we are generous and accommodating, we shall not only feel happier, but shall have

friends. But it is right, and this is the first consideration always."

"It is a pity to get so little good out of religion."

That he was benevolent by nature and liberal with his means by custom, is shown in the son's tribute to the memory of his father:

"There was a poor Irish woman in the village to whom father in his quiet way often gave needed gifts. She has told me that one day at a store he slipped a silver piece in her hand without saying anything, and a chance visitor has found her Thanksgiving table supplied by the same giver."

And again:

"It was father's lifelong habit to set apart one tenth of his income for benevolent purposes, calling it a sacred fund. The children spoke of it as 'good money.' While doing this himself he seldom spoke of it or enjoined it on others."

The foregoing account of Rev. D. D. Tappan has been given because of the strong side-lights thrown by it on the personality of his son Eugene. The similarity is striking. From this glimpse into the

character of an ancestry accustomed to high thinking and right living, one can readily see what manner of son Eugene Tappan ought to have been, and the better appreciate what manner of man he was.

But the start in life thus secured, by a liberal inheritance of high-mindedness and self-respect, was perhaps the only one — by no means, however, omitting his home influence — that Eugene obtained outside of his own exertions. His father, by reason of his unremunerative profession and generous habits of giving, continued to be a "poor minister"; moving from pulpit to pulpit in small country towns and never accumulating any considerable surplus store of worldly goods for his family.

Would that the writer could outline a mental picture of Eugene as a boy at Marshfield the first eleven years of his life. How easy and pleasant it would be to evolve, from such a boy as we must believe him to have been, the Eugene Tappan so well known and beloved in his manhood estate.

Referring to the home of his boyhood, he wrote:

"Marshfield without a railroad was a

quiet town. The passing of the stagecoach was a daily event to us children. 'A cow went past the house today,' was father's sportive way of stating the dearth of news in a letter."

It was here that he first went to the village school, and received, in the peaceful home of an upright and religious family, the childhood impressions that underlay the mature character of the man.

One who was a playmate of his while living at Marshfield, and a life-long friend, writes of him as a schoolboy:

"I remember him very well as we were about the same age, when schoolmates, and quite intimate. We were both quite interested in drawing; we had a scheme to make an atlas and draw all the maps ourselves, needless to say it was never finished. He was liked as a boy by all of us, and had the alert and energetic way which characterized him in after life."

How easy it is to recognize Mr. Tappan in this schoolboy picture — the originality of the "atlas scheme" and the "alert and energetic way," so truly represent him.

PUPIL AND TEACHER.

Leaving Marshfield in 1851, the family, after spending a year at Bridgewater, moved to Farmington, N. H. — the father having a call to preach there — where they lived until Eugene was nineteen years old. During this period of life he was much away from home, alternating between fitting for college and teaching school. His mother died when he was sixteen; the even tenor of home life was broken, and Eugene, the eldest son, cheerfully without doubt, undertook to help support and educate himself.

He taught school in Farmington when he was sixteen years old. An elder sister writes of this experience:

"It was an interesting sight to notice how easily the boy in his short round jacket commanded the respectful attention of pupils older than himself — one, at least, of them a full grown, bearded man."

Between 1852 and 1857 he also attended school at Lebanon and Topsfield Academies.

His sister gives another word-picture of him as a student:

"He was a studious lad and a fine mathematician. One of his teachers was fond of showing off his ability in this line of study. He was a great reader — always reading with dictionary close at hand, and choosing solid books rather than stories."

The testimony, however, of one who was a girl pupil in his school about this time, gives the finishing touch to the serious likeness and makes it lifelike:

"He was very much liked and was always full of fun."

His sister, again writing of these years of his youth, says:

"Later he taught other schools in different places and always aimed to give his best efforts to stimulate and encourage all that was good in his pupils. He was fond of poetry and early in life showed a talent for verse making which sometimes appeared in the form of a composition at school."

A companion of "Eugene in the years of his early manhood," writes:

"I can only say that from my very first

acquaintance with him, his dignified and modest bearing commanded my respect and admiration, and I looked upon him as one of the most exemplary young men it had ever been my fortune to meet.

"His conversation always led up to subjects that appealed to the heart and conscience, and when in his presence one seemed to be encircled in a halo of love and reverence.

"His store of subjects for entertainment seemed unlimited, and the hours that I passed in his company were only too brief, while in parting I carried with me the sweetest recollections of his genial and lovely personality.

"I have in my possession the cherished lines which he wrote on the death of our mutual friend, the late Sidney A. Merriam. The pathos and touching sweetness and tenderness of these lines (which I enclose) reflect the character of his own dear heart. Surely such a character leaves behind a monument of virtue as enduring as the Pyramids.

"His life work was not interred with his bones, but will live and bear fruit when

those who knew and loved him are numbered with the passed."

A SONNET WRITTEN BY EUGENE TAPPAN.

"SIDNEY."

"To search the place where nestled in the Spring
The fragrant buds awakening first to life,
And homeward from the Summer woods to bring
Some rare plant that would not elude thy sight,
And Autumn's glorious gathering
To rank its colors in thy chosen way,
And to each fern and every delicate thing
That grows, a natural regard to pay,
This ever was thy joy, Oh gentle friend,
When in thy company — too short the day —
I walked, while sweet discourse our minds would blend.
The fields invite us, Sidney, why delay?
On the bright fields of bliss I see thee wend
Thy footsteps midst the flowers where pleasures never end."

Eugene Tappan completed fitting for College at Kimball Union Academy in Meriden, N. H., graduating in 1859. Between the time of leaving College and commencing the study of Law, he again took up school teaching and was employed in this familiar and congenial work at West Dennis, and

Centerville, on the Cape. In these schools he displayed, as before, his great fertility of resource and the independent, practical methods in interesting and teaching his scholars that have been alluded to by others who knew him in his younger days.

It is told that he introduced some innovations which proved quite a revelation to the school authorities and considerably upset some of the established customs concerning school discipline; for instance: he would play games with the large boys at recess with mutual enjoyment and no loss of self-respect; at other times, on pleasant afternoons, he would conduct the school on long walks for nature observation — even suspending the regular exercises for this novel kind of study.

It was while teaching one of these schools that the girl, who afterwards became his wife, attracted his especial interest as a pupil. An elderly lady living near the schoolhouse noticed that whenever this young lady passed on her way to school she was often overtaken by the "young master," and remarked:

"I guess that will be a match sometime."

COLLEGE STUDENT.

Eugene Tappan entered Williams College in 1860, as a member of the class of '64, and remained only during the freshman year. His lateness in entering college was due to the necessity of having to pay his way by teaching—as one of his classmates says, "He had an excellent fit"—and the early termination of his course was, doubtless, for the same reason. But his career in college, though "brief," was "joyous," and he made a mark as a "brilliant student" and a "good fellow." A classmate writes:

"He was a fine scholar, lively and full of fun, but of good habits and correct deportment. I do not certainly know why he left college. It may be that he lacked means."

Another college friend speaks of him as:

" . . . this sparkling man . . . whose later and whose latest years made good the modest and talented guarantees of his early days. . . . I should dearly love to lay a flower on his casket."

Rev. J. L. R. Trask, D.D., a member of the class of '64 at Williams, who roomed in

the same dormitory, sat in the same pew at chapel and near him in the class room, pays this truthful and tender tribute to the memory of his friend:

"Eugene Tappan became a member of the Freshman Class of '64, Williams College, in September 1860. He left College at the close of the first year. During his brief membership he stamped his rare individuality on every one of his classmates. He was a man never to be forgotten. First of all he is remembered for the rich geniality of his nature. He was of the friendly type. Not only was he unique, he was picturesque and romantic. He ran to poetry as the Berkshire brooks run to music. He was a fine and exact scholar also. He came from the brilliant training of Dr. Richards of Meriden, N. H. It was a pleasure to hear him translate Homer and Livy. He was of singular modesty, although he must have been conscious, as all his classmates were, of his unusual intellectual powers.

"He was not given to excessive conversation, but when he spoke he was easily brilliant. The men who went with him on

long walks amongst the mountains, or in his company spent the night on "Greylock," brought back with them memorable reports of the bright things he said and the novel things he did.

"He joined in the class debates and made his side of the contention, strong. I recall with vividness, after the lapse of nearly fifty years, his defence of his client in a moot-court, in which he took the ground that his client could not have been where the opposing advocate claimed he was, and could not have committed the offence charged, because at the time of the charge he was suffering from an attack of 'gravel.' Tappan managed the case with the dexterity, the wit and the cunning of an old lawyer, and some suggested that he must have been already a student in the Courts, rather than a country schoolmaster who had been teaching in order to get money to prosecute his studies in College; and all said that Tappan had made no mistake in his choice of a profession.

"He was an earnest Christian man, attentive at the religious exercises of the College; his hand and his heart found in every

good work. With all the promptness of a strong nature, he was singularly gentle in his manner. It is not strange he became a favorite in the life and affection of the class, and when it was said at the beginning of the Sophomore year, 'Tappan is not coming back,' there was an uncommon expression of regret.

"I do not remember that he ever attended a reunion of the class, but inquiries were always made concerning him and a deep interest was cherished in the occurrences of his life. He gave early the promise of a deep, penetrating and sagacious mind. He has kept the promise well. He was a student, a gentleman, a friend and a Christian to the last."

From the extracts which have been given the consistent course of Mr. Tappan's life can be easily traced.

A MEMBER OF THE BAR.

It must have been a great disappointment to Mr. Tappan to be obliged to leave college before the completion of his course. He had advanced far enough to find the study intellectually congenial, the friendships close to his heart, all the associations of "Old Williams" dear to him, and himself giving unusual promise of a high order of scholarship. Yet the call of duty prompted him to sunder the ties that bound him to this cherished life that comes but once to a man, and resume school teaching for a period, as a means to another definitely desired end.

He read law with Bacon & Aldrich (late Judges of the Superior Court) in Worcester, and was admitted to the bar in 1871. Coming to Boston he became associated with the law firm of Proctor, Warren & Brigham, afterwards changed to Proctor, Brigham & Tappan, and later to Proctor, Tappan & Warren. He continued a member of this firm until his appointment as

Assistant Register of Probate in 1895. Bentley W. Warren, Esq., who is a member of that firm, kindly supplies us with the following information regarding Mr. Tappan's "specialties" in the practice of the law:

"Mr. Tappan did not enjoy, and rarely engaged in, active court practice. He had, however, great skill in the preparation of cases for trial, and his quality of mind and memory was such as to make him a very valuable associate in the trial of a case. I remember hearing my father, who used to try a great many cases, say that Mr. Tappan could take the most exact notes, and remember the greatest amount of evidence and incidents in the trial of a case, of anyone he had known. He was an exhaustive reader of law and had an immense fund of statute and case knowledge always available for his own use, or for the aid of his associates. His temperament was modest and retiring rather than assertive, and when he could he would avoid expressing an opinion on a law question, but would give all the known statutes and decisions necessary to form an opinion upon the ques-

tion, and the information which he gave in this way was very exhaustive.

"I should say that his specialties, during his long association with this office, were examinations of law and conveyancing. In the latter field too much cannot be said of the accuracy and skill of his work. His wide knowledge of the law itself enabled him, in examining a title, to know at once, as he looked at the record of each instrument, what, if any, doubtful questions existed in the title, and usually enabled him to answer them as he made his examination. His thoroughness and care, however, were such that he always reviewed each legal question which had arisen in the title, and verified the law bearing upon it, before he finally passed or rejected the title."

In 1895 Mr. Tappan accepted the appointment as Assistant Register of Probate at Boston and retired from active practice of the law. Just what were his reasons for making the change from membership in a long established, reputable and prosperous law firm to a subordinate position in the Probate office, cannot be stated because

they are not known. But from what has been testified to concerning his preferences in practice; his especial aptitude in details of office work of an exact nature requiring unusual faithfulness and knowledge of law available for quick service, and a temperamental dislike of the self-assertiveness more common in general practice, it may be inferred that the change was one of choice. And considering his well known fondness for a certain kind of disinterested public service rendered largely outside the hours of regular business and without pecuniary consideration, it may be readily believed that he was willing to sacrifice a higher personal ambition in order to save time and strength for this purely unselfish work. This explanation may not seem incompatible with the character of the man as it has been developed in the records of these pages.

In this office the opportunities for kindly helpfulness and the exercise of patience, cheerfulness and the spirit of good-will, characteristic of his nature, were surely sufficiently ample. Although manifestly occupying a position subject to annoyance

from the great multitude of clients who "want to know," it would be testified to by all — practitioners and laymen — that he did not fortify himself behind his desk and volunteer as little information as possible in reply to the inquiries of such visitors, but would come out in front of the rail — meeting the inquirer more than half-way — and answer questions, and explain technical points to the unsophisticated, with an inexhaustible fund of patience, and willingness to lighten the burden of other's perplexities.

Judge Elijah George, who, during this period, held the office of Register of Probate, thus offers his appreciative testimonial:

"In the enclosed typewritten paragraph, I have in a few words sketched my appreciation of Eugene Tappan as we knew him, throughout his service of thirteen years in the office of the Register of Probate and Insolvency for Suffolk County, all of which period fell under my administration. The pleasure of his association, the confidence in his ability and faithfulness, and his never

failing courtesy and helpfulness to all, are worthy of a more extended notice.

" . . . Mr. Eugene Tappan was appointed Assistant Register of Probate for the County of Suffolk on October 5th, 1895. He continued in the office and fulfilled its duties faithfully and with ability up to the time of his death. His whole service was characterized by loyalty to his Superior Officer, devotion to his work and a care and caution in the performance of his daily duties, which were of a nature requiring the exercise of patience, discretion and tact. Of an optimistic nature he derived a great deal of pleasure from his work, and his genial smile, as he stood with his head slightly forward, and hands behind his back, debating some question of practice with a young attorney, will long be remembered by those who knew him. His relations with his fellow workers were always pleasant, and his thoughtfulness and willingness to do his share were appreciated by all who labored with him. Punctual, painstaking, courteous and accurate, he was a faithful and efficient public servant."

LIFE IN WINCHESTER.

On December 24th, 1872, Eugene Tappan and Alice Rebecca Crosby were married in Barnstable. His first acquaintance with her was as a pupil in his school at Centerville, seven or eight years before. A few years after marriage the young couple established a home at Winchester, where between 1879 and 1887, their four children — one daughter and three sons — were born. In 1889 the wife and mother died.

The twenty-two years that Mr. Tappan lived in Winchester covered the hard working period of his life. The demand upon his time by professional duties, and the cares and anxieties connected with the rearing of a young family — early left motherless — must have been a severe tax upon his health and strength. Yet we are told by a fellowtownsman and co-worker in matters of local interest, that:

"He was very much interested in town and church affairs and was at one time

Superintendent of the Intermediate Department of the Sunday School."

He had very original ideas for imparting knowledge. Continuing he says:

"I made him a lot of little wooden books, to represent the books of the Bible, all the same height, but of different thicknesses, as the books they represented were long or short."

His quickness to see and correct outgrown methods produced improvement in many ways — the system of classes was rearranged to suit his experienced ideas, and, it is said, the antiquated S. S. Library was overhauled, many books of a morbid-sentimental sort, being, through his influence, eliminated. Like the innovations in discipline introduced in his early school-teaching days, these changes, at first regarded with disfavor, soon became established.

The Sunday afternoon walks with his children while he told stories and talked about the trees, flowers, and birds, is a tenderly remembered feature of the family life in those days.

Another Winchester friend, associated with him in Sunday School work, writes:

"I fear I have not the ability to prepare anything worthy of our late friend, Mr. Eugene Tappan. My acquaintance with Mr. Tappan began when I was Superintendent of the Sunday School in Winchester, and Winchester Highlands. I found him very faithful and very helpful in that work.

"He had a way of illustrating the old truths that made a great impression upon the children. His original methods called for much sacrifice and faithful work and no little expense, which he chose to meet himself. Very many Saturday evenings I have known him to work until midnight preparing something for the children's service the next day that would first attract the eye and yet emphasize a truth that they would remember. The boys and girls of Winchester will never forget the sayings of Eugene Tappan, nor the lessons in character building he tried to teach."

LIFE IN SHARON.

In 1898, Mr. Tappan; his second wife, (Miss Clara M. Jones of Enfield, N. H., to whom he had been married December 12, 1894) and his children, came to Sharon to live. The associations formed by a long residence in Winchester had become strong, and the ties of friendship and memory were hard to break. Speaking of his reasons for this move, in his Journal under date of July 15th, 1898, referring to the health of his wife, he writes:

"She has now been very nearly a year in Sharon and has thus proved that the air and other existing conditions are favorable to her health. As it is therefore prudent for her to continue there, it seems best to move the family there."

But here again affliction soon visited him through the death of Mrs. Tappan, October 30, 1900.

In this new field his entrance was at once marked by a resumption of the activities — Sunday School work and a general interest in town affairs — previously

employed by him in Winchester. Recalling his long experience as a young man in school teaching, he paid especial attention to school affairs by frequent visits, and by stimulating the scholars' interest through the personal offering of prizes for excellence in departments which he thought should be entitled to greater importance. In such work he kept himself characteristically in the background and, at a later date, declined, when urged, to serve as a member of the School Committee. He also systematically visited the older residents of the town, acquainting himself with the people and their interests. Many pages of his Journal, written at this time, are devoted to recording things which he was learning concerning the local history of families — names, dates, anecdotes, etc.— by which to become familiar with the new life and surroundings.

He was accustomed to walk much on Sunday afternoons and half holidays, and at such times would seek the acquaintance of remote families; would hunt up places of historical interest; discover attractive bits of scenery; with senses continually

alert for knowledge and beauty. He has left an uncompleted book in which he catalogued and described more than two hundred "localities and places in Sharon, such as streets, hills, brooks, monuments, swamps, cemeteries, special names of fields, large trees, and old cellar holes," which will be of increasing interest and historical value.

It is generally known that Mr. Tappan had a kind heart and a generous hand, but no one not conversant with his daily Journal — containing a simple record of deeds, not thoughts — for many years, can understand the fulness and extent of his numberless thoughtful kindnesses and charities:

"Called on 'A,' who has been sick a week, left a squab and some oranges," he records; and:

"Inquired at door for Mrs. 'B,' and left small silver spoon with initials for the newborn daughter."

Such memoranda are frequent. And again on individual birthday anniversaries — a long list of which he had preserved — he would jot down the little appropriate good-will gift presented.

Indeed it would not be strange if he, himself, would be surprised, on re-reading his own record, at the extent of these private benefactions.

No one but the recipient knew of this quiet giving, and yet his purse was usually opened on call for the benefit of worthy public charity. It is now known that, on more than one occasion, he supplied, from his own means, a deficiency in the appropriation, when acting as a representative for others equally interested with himself.

Charity, with him, did not always begin at home.

But in the main his life in Sharon was an open book. Ever ready to sacrifice himself first, he found it not difficult to induce others to do likewise in the promotion of some desirable object. He avoided argument and was not given to positive statement of opinion. His influence in a good cause, or a principle, was habitually exercised by example, rather than by precept, and his energy and enthusiasm, in matters conducive to harmony and good will, knew no bounds.

He was noticeably quiet in town affairs,

but without 'talk' could be relied upon to act on the right side. One who was asked to "see Mr. Tappan and get him to vote with us," replied that, Mr. Tappan was intelligent enough to judge the merits of the question and conscientious enough to vote accordingly. And yet his influence in such matters in a quiet way was not without positive effect. The fact of his silence; an expressive gesture or change of countenance, might give the cue to his opinions which, when detected, would carry more weight than a volume of words from another.

Although conscientiously interested in all matters of public welfare and always an attendant at Town Meeting, he was rarely on his feet to address the Moderator; on one occasion, however, a question had been decided adversely to the interests of one, whose claim he believed to be just, by a snap vote, and a reconsideration was allowed; Mr. Tappan arose and merely said, in effect, that, without having had an opportunity to inform himself thoroughly, he thought he could see that there might be an honest difference of opinion concerning the

point at issue, and therefore suggested that perhaps the question might fairly be decided so as to give the aggrieved party the benefit of the doubt. This from him was enough and the vote was promptly reversed.

His integrity of character was undoubted. In a conversation between two fellowtownsmen, 'A' was remarking upon the difficulty — almost impossibility — of feeling absolutely sure of the honesty of any man under all circumstances; to which 'B' replied:

"I don't entirely share your doubt; I *know*, for instance, that *Mr. Tappan* could never commit a dishonest act."

SENSE OF HUMOR AND LITERARY STYLE.

Although Mr. Tappan's aims were high, and his life, in a sense, serious, it would be very, very unrealistic to suppose him to have been devoid of humor. On the contrary, like his father, he had an abundance of it. The friends of his early life speak of him as being "a lively companion," and "having lots of fun in him;" and his Sharon friends, surely, cannot bring him to mind without the fun and frolic of his nature appearing most prominent. Without these qualities we could not recognize Mr. Tappan. He was a most amusing man — irrepressible with his good-natured jokes. As in his college days on excursions with the boys, reports came back "of the bright things he said and the novel things he did," so in after years he continued to be the life of any company — young or old — in which he happened to be.

Indeed he often could not help seeing the

funny side even on occasions most serious. Thus in his Journal he writes:

"Was sent for at midnight to see 'M' [an old man] who was told he had but a few hours to live. Spent several hours at his bed-side writing Will and seeing same properly executed. Paid me one dollar."

His contagious shout of merriment will often come to mind whenever his memory is recalled. An evening meeting is remembered at which a revivalist preacher was in attendance; he asked for a drink of water, and something in the way he crooked his elbow, perhaps, and tossed off the glass without pausing in his impassioned oratory, touched Mr. Tappan's sense of the ludicrous and one of his characteristic explosions of mirth resulted.

He was most original, unique, in his fun — a jolly man — and withal, never forgetful of the feelings of others. On any excursion — rain or shine — to have him along meant a good time. (How amused Mr. Tappan might have been at this poor rhyme.)

A great deal of his lighter side was shown in the verses he wrote; on all occasions, at

home when any of the family were away, or when travelling by himself, he would write humorous verse for his own and others' entertainment; just as he often, when a boy at school, would write compositions in rhyme. It would be pleasant to read these amusing verses were it not a violation of tender feelings to put them in print.

Many of his poetical writings were more dignified in tone, several such have appeared in print in connection with the exercises of the Historical Society, and some of the shorter ones — such as the sonnet, "To Sidney," already given in these pages — show a refined sentiment and much tenderness of feeling; but it is doubtful if Mr. Tappan ever thought of himself seriously as a poet, or ever expected his efforts in this line to be made public.

He was continually writing in prose for newspapers and other publications and was very fond of doing so. He was a man of brilliant ideas with the happy faculty of fluent expression without verbiage; to apply to him his own words in referring to another:

"The pleasure [derived from] luminous expression in composition."

His literary work was, in style, a model of conciseness rarely surpassed and peculiarly characteristic of himself. While reading his written thoughts, one familiar with his mannerisms, tones of voice and facial expressions, would involuntarily find them reproduced in imagination.

His very handwriting was expressive of himself — compact, legible, free from embellishments. His composition was always in pure and simple English.

SHARON HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

It has been suggested that perhaps Mr. Tappan was willing to lessen his professional responsibilities, by retiring from the active practice of law, in order to have more time at his disposal for outside work of a strictly public-spirited character. At all events after coming to Sharon he did so occupy his spare time. He began almost at once to interest himself in the social life of the town in a broader sense, as has already been narrated somewhat in detail, and to write for the local papers the impressions he received. He informed the older residents concerning many interesting items of local history heretofore unfamiliar to them, or known to but few, and described many attractive features of the neighborhood — pleasant walks and fine bits of scenery — thus bringing to notice the fact that the village offered a wider range of desirabilities than had been commonly presented.

Furthermore after the death of his wife in 1890, it is evident that he sought increased mental occupation in such work. His example stimulated others to seek new interests and appreciate more fully the real value of living. The observance of Old Home Week had recently been inaugurated in some New England towns, and, in 1902, Mr. Tappan, — with others whom he inspired — introduced the custom in Sharon with marked success, and the continued observance of its anniversary has become a popular event.

He quickly discerned the dramatic features in the character and career of Deborah Sampson, the female soldier of the Revolution, who after the war married and lived in Sharon, and exploited them; making the most of the opportunity to bring the people together and arouse enthusiasm in the historical personages and events of the town.

In 1903 he became a member of the Antiquarian Committee, and, in co-operation with others of this Committee, incorporated the Sharon Historical Society, of which he was elected the Corresponding

Secretary and continued to be the ruling spirit until his death. Into the work of this Society he entered with heart and mind, and the attention given to its interests by him and the benefits which he hoped, though its influence, would result to the community, seem in many respects to have constituted the crowning effort of his life.

Mr. Tappan was not only the founder of the Sharon Historical Society, but he established the standard upon which it should be conducted. A newcomer to the town, he observed the different — and differing — elements in the community — denominational, political, social — new comers with metropolitan ideas and the descendants of the first settlers, between whom there was a natural lack of sympathy. He desired to promote harmony and brotherly love. Interested in the church of his fathers, he would have been pleased to make it broad enough to allow and induce all to enter, but realizing that this might not be practicable in his time, he cast about for some other medium through which to invite and interest all the people. Without any especial

previous interest in matters of local history, he was quick to preceive the situation here offered — both by reason of the volume of the uncultivated historical store and the unusual apathy of the people regarding the subject.

Here then was an opportunity for culture as well as for harmony. He founded the Historical Society. It was to accomplish for the inhabitants of the town what other organizations had failed to do. He set the standard high. How successfully he fulfilled its purposes and maintained its standards to the limit of his life, need not be retold. He was behind every endeavor and every accomplishment, taking the larger share of responsibility, but refusing to accept any credit for success. His capacity for getting other people to work was exceeded only by his willingness to work himself.

He took every man for the best that was in him — ignoring all else — thereby encouraging in others an increased feeling of self respect which must always be the foundation of true character. He cheerfully took the laboring oar, but he expected

the other occupants of the boat to pull hard too. But few, if any, were found to betray his confidence or deny his appeal, knowing that, in case of failure to respond, he would supply the deficiency without reproach. It was a joy to him to work hard for the public good. He was equal to any emergency. It was characteristic of him to sink the individual. He was essentially a friend of the people. Naturally retiring, he was willing to take the lead when no other leader was at hand.

Perhaps his enthusiasm might have flagged at times — otherwise it would be hardly human — but his constant co-workers could never perceive it, if so. His love of work; his unselfish devotion to the cause of social uplifting, and his unwavering faith in the possibilities of human advancement — these alone could have sustained him; and they did sustain him when some of his associates would fain have had him lay the burden down. Speaking of interests near his heart, shortly before his death, he said, in his own inimitable disguise of seriousness:

"Don't you believe that this work will go

right on just the same, even if — we'll say Mr. Smith or Mr. Jones — should drop out?"

A brave reply was attempted, but — alas — with what a sinking heart.

Such a life as his makes others possible. He was as a luminary of unusual brilliancy flashed across the local sky once in the life of a generation, not half appreciated till past, but then long remembered and talked of, and the coming of another confidently predicted.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES.

Mr. Tappan was a faithful attendant upon all the exercises of the church, and rarely omitted to take a part whenever it was the custom for laymen to do so. This was in accordance with early associations, and his heart was in the work, especially as it related to the Sunday School. In his Journal one may always find recorded, the text of the Sunday sermon; the subject of the Sunday School lesson and the names of those present in his class; and similar notice is given of the other religious gatherings through the week. Probably he showed no outward signs of disappointment if his efforts did not always meet with such appreciation as would warm his heart, but here is a pathetic extract from his Journal which discloses the capacity of the earnest teacher for extracting crumbs of comfort:

"'C's' mother says that he liked me as teacher last Sunday and hoped that I would take the class again."

Someone has said:

"Mr. Tappan was, first of all, a good churchman and a good Christian."

Doubtless this is true. He was faithful in the discharge of every duty — as he saw it to be duty. No one who knew him could doubt his entire loyalty to the church of his bringing up, or his devotion to its welfare. He was also a progressive Christian, and if he did not always feel entirely satisfied with the attitude of his church, it was his intelligent policy — and he saw it to be his duty — to seek for reform through sympathetic work from within the organization rather than by cold criticism from outside.

His life was governed by his own high ethical sense, but he habitually exercised the broadest toleration towards others respecting all matters of personal belief and conduct. His personality displayed a combination none too common: In steadfastness of principle — the Puritan; in unselfish instinct — the Gentleman.

But leaving analysis aside; it is enough to say that he held the respect and affection of all who knew him.

Rev. Osmond J. Billings was, as a young

man, a member of Mr. Tappan's Sunday School class, and later became his associate in work connected with the Congregational Church of Sharon. He writes:

"In estimating the religious life of another, one is always subject to human limitation of vision. 'The hidden springs we may not know.' This inability to know completely another's soul was exemplified in the case of Mr. Tappan, who joined to universal geniality and friendliness a reticence in regard to the deepest things of his soul life.

"But this word has come down from the great Teacher, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' Estimating according to this test and reading from without inward we may discern something of the life principles within.

"Mr. Tappan's religious activity was notably steady and continuous. He was absolutely dependable. His religion was not of the type in which periods of great ardor alternate with indifference. Sunday by Sunday he was found in his place at church and it is interesting to notice that he was not of that overwhelming majority

who shun the front seats — I wonder if this choice of a front seat, noticeable also in the prayer-meeting, may not have been a matter of principle. At the mid-week meeting his presence and his participation could be counted on. And if the writer is not mistaken, it was not the easiest task for him to stand and express his thought, for there were indications of embarrassment.

"Not only was Mr. Tappan's religious activity steady and continuous, there was also in his outward appearance little manifestation of that alternation of downheartedness and good cheer that may sometimes be observed. If he had the 'blues,' he did not discolor the atmosphere about him. If he had burdens, he kept them to himself. He may have confided them to his heavenly Father, but he did not seek to cumber other men with them. His cheerful strength and his steadiness of religious observance indicate a faith and a purpose that were not dependent on emotion alone, but grounded in a conscious, firmly fixed choice of the will.

"Mr. Tappan believed in a religion that is intellectual. He was a student of God's

Word. He strove to interest the young men of his class in the Sunday School by means of fresh devices. He was an advocate of written examinations in the Bible school. He believed in making Bible study worth while and was not slow to expend energy, time and money in bringing this about.

"Intellectual breadth was characteristic of the man. While reverent in his attitude, he was open-minded to receive the results of critical study and was not afraid to go where the truth might lead him. And yet to this intellectual candor was united a regard for others that was careful not to offend against their cherished beliefs, nor provoke controversy.

"This intellectual breadth helped to make him tolerant of those with other creeds and methods. He was ready to see the good in others and join with them in helpful activities. But his intellectual make-up does not alone account for this. We should miss the secret of Mr. Tappan's life, did we not perceive kindliness of heart and love to one's fellow men. Every good cause found him ready with support.

"This love for others made Mr. Tappan democratic, as it will tend to make any man who has it. In another direction it took form in an unwillingness to listen to words derogatory to another. His was the love that desired to think no evil. The following stanza in part at least expresses the spirit of his life:

'Let me live in a house by the side of the road
Where the race of men go by.
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong,
Wise, foolish; so am I.
Then why should I sit in the scorner's seat
Or hurl the cynic's ban?
Let me live in a house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.'

"It seems evident that the love that Mr. Tappan had to men rested back upon faith in a God, Who desires the good of all men. His type of religion was not the mystical, it would seem, but the practical, and yet we can discern under the outward devotion to religious service and community helpfulness, a deep, abiding, personal trust in the heavenly Father."

NEARING THE END.

During the last few years of Mr. Tappan's life it was evident, to those with whom he was closely associated, that he was carrying more than one man's burden of responsibility. Although apparently in vigorous health and in the full enjoyment of all his powers and happy in the work of his choice, it was perhaps inevitable that some weak spot should develop, and, at his age, a general impairment of his health follow.

In the fall of 1907 he suffered an attack of the Grippe and while he made, and continued to the last, a brave fight to throw off the resulting weakness, the decline of his strength was sure, though gradual, until the end came. But during this period of about eight months he kept in close touch with the work of the Probate Office, carrying the details in his mind and personally directing much of it when unable to leave his home.

His interest in the affairs of the Historical Society, also, were as keen as ever dur-

ing this period of his illness, and his plans for meetings, and the arrangements for the approaching Old Home Week observances, all originated in his active brain and were carried out as he directed, although he did not live to enjoy the accomplishment of the full program.

Notwithstanding the wasting disease from which he suffered, his strength of mind and his love of life were such that he was able to rise above his physical weakness and pain and preserve the interest in his work, and his cheerful outlook, until his death.

"I know the night is near at hand,
The mists lie low on hill and bay;
The autumn sheaves are dewless, dry —
But I have had — have had — the day.
Yes, I have had, dear Lord, the day;
When at Thy call I have the night,
Brief be the twilight as I pass
From light to dark, from dark to light."

Eugene Tappan passed to his rest July 10th, 1908 — aged 68 years — and the flags of the village floated at half-mast.

MEMORIAL SERVICES.

Rev. Almon J. Dyer, the pastor of the church which Mr. Tappan attended, writes as follows:

"The funeral services of Mr. Tappan were held at 3.30 o'clock on Sunday afternoon, July 12th, at his late residence on South Pleasant Street. They were of the simplest order as befitted a man of his simplicity and modesty of life and character. Rev. A. J. Dyer, pastor of the Congregational Church in Sharon conducted the service and spoke briefly and comprehensively of Mr. Tappan's great activity and usefulness in the church and community since taking up his residence in town. Rev. D. Augustine Newton, pastor of the Congregational Church in Winchester, of which the deceased had long been a member, spoke appreciatively and affectionately of his influence there.

"The services were semi-private, but all classes of the citizens of Sharon, official

and unofficial, were represented. The passing of one so thoroughly loyal to the church and so generally active in the various departments of its work, could not be without special recognition.

"The seven o'clock evening service of the day was made an informal memorial service. There were the usual opening exercises and then the pastor gave the people opportunity to express themselves freely. The response was prompt, spontaneous, and hearty. No previous notice had been given, yet a goodly number found something definite, distinctive and important to say. Those who spoke were: Rev. C. A. Perry, Messrs. M. P. W. Kreutz, D. W. Pettee, W. P. Fiske, A. A. Bailey, E. G. Richards, Mrs. A. A. Bailey, and Rev. A. J. Dyer."

At the annual reunion of the Sharon Center School Association held in Old Home Week, July 30th, 1908, the following Resolutions were adopted:

WHEREAS: The Sharon Center School Association is deeply grieved by the death of Eugene Tappan, an honorary member since 1902, and desires to express its recognition of his high character and unselfish devotion to the common welfare, therefore it is:

Resolved, that appreciation of his work and fidelity to his memory must inevitably lead to the continued advancement of the Kingdom of God in this community, which ideal he had ever at heart; and further,

Resolved, that from the very regrets at his loss there must spring a feeling of gratitude for his efforts in the uplifting of the social life of his town and for the recollection of his genial acquaintance.

"Thanks be to God that such have been,
Although they are no more."

Resolved, that these resolutions be spread upon the records of the Association and a copy transmitted to his afflicted family.

The quarterly meeting of the Sharon Historical Society, which occurred a few weeks later, became, by common consent, a memorial to the late Corresponding Secretary.

The following are extracts copied from the Record Book of the Society:

Directors' Meeting, July 27th, 1908.

"Mr. Quinn chosen to present resolutions on the death of Mr. Tappan, and it was unanimously voted that John G. Phillips be the speaker for the Society after their reading."

Meeting Society, July 31st, 1908.

"The following resolution was presented by Mr. T. F. Quinn, prefaced by remarks by the President, and followed by remarks by Mr. Quinn, E. H. Hewins, Geo. Kempton, John O'Brien, Dr. Loring Puffer of Brockton, and J. G. Phillips. The resolutions were unanimously adopted by a rising vote:

WHEREAS: Divine Providence has seen fit to remove from our midst our beloved friend and co-worker, Eugene Tappan, Esq.,

Therefore, be it resolved that Eugene

Tappan was no common man; noble in his impulses; careful in his management; broad in his charity; unceasing in his influence; modest and unassuming, he was equal to any occasion that called for his service. May the Great Father of us all comfort and sustain us in our loss."

This meeting on July 31st, following so closely the death of Mr. Tappan, was largely attended by members of the Society, and many others, sincerely wishing to pay respect to the memory of one who had been the life of the Society and, in the highest sense, the benefactor of the community.

At the close of the meeting the following poem, composed by Mr. Tappan for one of the "Summer Rambles" of the Historical Society, was sung:

"Lake Massapoag lies in the heart of the town,
With its beautiful face to the sky,
And its lover, the Sun, all the day time looks down
And smiles from its station on high.
Surrounded by groves in its rural retreat,
The wild flocks here assemble for flight,
And the moon and the stars are impatient to meet
Where their beauty is mirrored at night.

"In the far away time the red Indian came
And his wigwam was built on the shore,
He fished on its waters and gave it the name
Of Massapoag for evermore.
Then the Puritan settled on the banks of the lake,
Tolman crossed in his boat to his cot,
And Gridley and Quincy in war learned to take
Iron ore for their cannon and shot.

"Where to slacken their thirst came the moose and the deer,
The fond heart will oft turn with delight,
As, bedecked with all charms that the senses can cheer,
Lake Massapoag gleams to the sight.
From the bowl of pure water in nature's own hand
We will drink to its health and our own,
For as long as the beautiful lives, it will stand
The loveliest lake we have known."

Addresses.

Remarks by Col. Edmund H. Hewins.

Mr. President:

As the pebble dropped into still waters sends out ripples in ever widening circles even to the farthest shore, so Eugene Tappan, coming into our community for a few brief years, by his activity in all that pertains to religious, moral and intellectual progress, exerted an influence, potent for good, that will be felt far beyond our ability to measure or even to recognize.

Without envy or self-seeking, ever charitable towards the failings of others, he exemplified in daily life much that makes for good citizenship. The community is the better for his having lived in it.

Mr. President:

I beg leave to second the resolution.

Remarks by Mr. George Kempton.

Mr. President:

I desire to second the resolution offered relating to our late Corresponding Secretary, but so much has already been expressed and so well said, that I will confine myself to only a brief tribute.

Our Historical Society is under great obligation to Mr. Tappan for his earnest, indefatigable, efforts in its behalf. Being full of enthusiasm himself he inspired many others to take an interest in the work and doings of the Society.

The pleasant outings to points of interest for which he made the arrangements, year after year, will be remembered. He seemed to enjoy the historical duties assigned to him, and we believe the closing years of his life were among the happiest. We need not expect to ever fill the position made vacant by his decease, but let us cherish his memory.

Address by John G. Phillips, Esq.

Mr. President:

In response to the invitation of the Directors of this Society, I consider it a privilege to second the excellent Resolutions which have been read upon the death of our esteemed Corresponding Secretary, and to contribute a few words of my own in appreciation of his character, out of my deep respect to his memory.

Eugene Tappan will always be regarded as the Father of the Sharon Historical Society. Although others, before him, had been working to the same end, it was his intellect which concentrated and organized these forces and made this Society an established fact. No one will dispute the statement that, ever since its incorporation in 1903 to the date of his death, he has furnished not only the major share of the brains, but a far more important factor, the unbounded enthusiasm, which together have supplied the electric current to turn the wheels of progress. This Society is most assuredly his child. The child of the ripeness of his maturity. The one from whom he

hoped the greatest blessings to flow. His favorite child.

It has been truly said that he was a good churchman — he was a broader man than that term signifies; a good citizen — his activities extended beyond the requirements of ordinary good citizenship; a courteous and genial gentleman — his courtesy and good-will were for the community as well as for the individual. These qualities were apparent to all and need not be dwelt upon. Indeed, any perfunctory eulogy would be distasteful to him. But yet, Eugene Tappan was a man of such strongly marked characteristics; his life work was so earnest; his methods so unique; his aim so direct; that it will be useful to us, and, I think, not displeasing to him, if we try, without undue praise, to form a just estimate of his character and of that which was the all-engrossing object of his life. What were some of these marked characteristics?

If we take the initial letters of his name, what general character of his may they be made to express? "E. T." Exhaustless Toiler — who greater? Again, one of his

favorite mottoes: "The pleasure of doing good is the only one that never wears out." I am also reminded of the Shorter Catechism of my childhood: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever," and the paraphrase in the words of a modern writer: "The end of life — ability to serve and ability to enjoy." Do not these suggest Eugene Tappan? The greater the capacity for enjoyment the more efficient the service to his fellowmen; the greater that service the greater his enjoyment. And what one of all our acquaintances can we recall who enjoyed life more fully or rendered more earnest service than he?

It has been my good fortune to enjoy a goodly share of his companionship for several years, and to gain some insight into the nature of the man; but the impression which remains has been derived from observation, or inference, rather than from any words of his concerning himself. Friends did not readily get very close to Mr. Tappan's inner self, nor did he seek to inquire into the personal affairs of others. Possessed of a strong personality, he was,

to use a paradox, the most impersonal man I ever knew. His personality has often made me think of Lincoln — both, men who formed few intimacies but cultivated a wide circle of friends and gave freely of their best to the general welfare at the time and under the conditions in which they lived. And, without appreciating his influence, he too, was, in his own sphere, a "Master of Men."

His activities and interests were many and varied, and friends, attracted to him along the different lines of these interests, might form varying conceptions of his character, but they would find all these lines converging to one central point. To analyze his character then more closely, what do we find to have been the chief aim and end of his work — the one purpose for which his connections with Church; Historical Society; Choral Society, and all his other interests, served as but the means to an end — what was that end? Not self culture nor enjoyment, although these objects were secured in a high degree; not ambition for wealth or honorary titles, surely; not personal salvation, primarily. A far

more altruistic purpose than any of these—it may be summed up in the one word, Brotherhood. Always ready to sacrifice personal motives to the promotion of brotherhood, with an untiring devotion and an enthusiasm so contagious as to inspire all others with whom he came in contact. This, if I mistake not, was the grand passion of his life and the especial quality that he would be glad, in his own modest way, to have us, his friends and co-workers, recognize and appreciate.

Truly his soul is marching on. I can think of no immortality that could appeal more powerfully to such an unselfish and earnest soul than that, through the influence of his life, this dream of brotherhood, for which he toiled and wore out his mortal energies, should become a living reality; and, in what would perhaps have been the very words of his choice: the Kingdom of God on earth be advanced in this community.

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